

Part III—Danny Blanton - Conservative Hero on the School Board!!! Subject: Restart Schools??? Report, Arguendo and Gossip by Robert A. Williams

“Restart Schools” were accidentally brought up by CCS Superintendent Stephen Fisher during the last two highly controversial School Board Meetings. Fisher referred to James Love Elementary School as being a Restart School during a discussion of the School Calendar. I did not know what a Restart School was, so I haven’t brought it up in my previous articles. But I put it on my list of things to check out. So, I have checked it out and did NOT like what I found. I suspect YOU will not like it either.

A Google check of the NC Department of Public Instruction shows that **a Restart School is a habitually underperforming (failing) school whose management has been taken over by an external entity. Another definition is Restart is defined as closing one underperforming school and opening a new school to serve the same students, often in the same building, under new management.**

External Entity? External to CCS? New Management? So, who is running James Love and any other Restart School in Cleveland County? And why did CCS, who claims to be so good in everything they do, allow ANY school in Cleveland County to become habitually underperforming (failing) to the point that some “External Entity” was required to come in and run the Restart Schools for CCS? And, why did the School Board and

Stephen Fisher NOT tell anybody? Where was the Shelby Star??? Where was Communities-In Schools, the Math Academy and all those other organizations that leech money out of CCS? The questions go on and on. As for me, I started checking out Restart Schools the minute I heard the term. CCS NEVER seems to identify their problems, much less fix them. When confronted, they always try to cover- up and deny. The whole school board and administration, except Danny Blanton, is in a state of denial. I suppose that is why they always cringe when they look up and see me.

Before we go any further here, we can easily guess what the School Board, Supt. Fisher and especially School Board Chairman Shearra Miller will say. "We don't have enough money." "We need more money." Expecting all of us to forget that they, CCS, are spending about \$600,000 altogether on a drain pipe at the Kings Mountain High School Football Field to support David Brinkley's "Touch-Down Club" put Astro-Turf on the football field instead of grass. Even though Astro-Turf is more expensive to maintain than grass. Astro-Turf requires a special chemical washing on a regular basis to keep down mold and other sorts of dangerous biological growths. You have to wonder if those special chemicals are dangerous too for developing children?

So, let's look at school funding.

CCS has a budget of \$155 million a year for around 15,000 students. That works out to about \$10,000 per student per year. So, taxpayers, over grades K-12 (13 years,) fork out \$130,000 for every child that goes through the Cleveland County School system. Whether the students learn anything or not. Or whether money is wasted or not.

But money IS wasted in large amounts at CCS. The new North Shelby School Project was \$4 to \$6 Million overbudget, mainly because the location chosen at James Love did not have the land that was suitable for construction. Causing major and

expensive soil remediation when there were other very well - suited locations that were available that were suitable for construction without such soil remediation. And the fact that the new North Shelby School Project was built for 175 students, but only 50 students actually attend.

Then, there is the new Shelby Middle School Project that is estimated to be \$6-\$8 million overbudget because, again, there were major and very expensive grading requirements as well as building the school for 800 students and only around 200 students would actually attend Shelby Middle School. A total lack of planning, easy planning, by CCS for both those projects.

Just these two projects went overbudget \$10-\$14 Million total because the School Board just flat refused to listen to people like Danny Blanton and others who tried to tell them this was a waste. Only to hear the School Board say, "Money is no object!!" Meaning, spending taxpayer money is no object. NO OBJECT for THEM!!!

If you are a taxpayer, you should take this to mean that you will vote AGAINST any increase in sales taxes to give more money to those who will, so very flagrantly and unashamedly waste YOUR additional sales tax funds too.

Now, back to Restart Schools.

Knowing how to handle the money issue and demanding an explanation of why CCS has failing schools when there are indeed sufficient funds available (\$130,000 per child-minus the waste) to actually provide a quality education to every child in Cleveland County is a necessary retribute for the CCS school board. Yet, only school board member Danny Blanton understands that and the rest of us taxpayers should understand that too. Vote against the sales tax increase now and in the future until CCS and Cleveland County has a well-developed plan that identifies the need for such a sales tax

increase. More about this will come later.

Now, consider this. If James Love elementary School is a Restart School, why would CCS insist that the new North Shelby School be built as an appendix to James Love? Nobody at CCS would ever say, but it seems obvious that associating James Love in combination with North Shelby was a mean and deceptive attempt to associate and reclassify James Love with handicapped students so as to create, on paper, a new category of school that would have a more relaxed performance standards, and even more relaxed measurements of performance, that would allow CCS to continue the very poor and failing management of James Love without having to make any improvements at all. Just a coverup for the poor performance of the CCS administration at the highest levels. And also, cover-up the fact that James Love was failing in the first place. Ultimately such an unscrupulous attempt failed to fool the NC Department of Public Instruction, so CCS just didn't tell the citizens of Cleveland County about this at all. Ignorance is bliss! Right? Right!!!

So, how many more Restart Schools are there within CCS? What about Graham? Supt Stephen Fisher and the School Board, that is a question for you to answer. Ignore at your own risk. Election time for you is fast approaching. It is certainly time to **"Restart" the School Board. Under a new management!!!**

But, the thing about that question is, where is that information publicly located. Checking with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's website, a detailed review shows no such information is readily available. All you see is where the North Carolina General Assembly is passing laws to make DPI as well as school districts accountable for the proper education of our children and the NCDPI bureaucracy and the CCS-school district's bureaucracies are covering up. It is no wonder that North Carolina DPI level and local school districts are spending so much money and accomplishing so little. And want more money at every turn, and with no

accountability and only negative results. It is obvious that the priorities in education at both the local and state level are totally upside down. It is also obvious, that without the General Assemblies so-called micromanagement, North Carolina, as well as Cleveland County, would rank at the bottom of education in the USA. And that education in the USA, compared with the rest of the world, is losing ground every day.

It is at time like this that I am proud that Cleveland County was smart enough to have elected someone like Danny Blanton to the Cleveland County Board of Education. Although Blanton has been outnumbered 8-1 for so long, the 2020 Elections with five seats up for election, will allow the opportunity for voters to swing the numbers to 6-3 the other way around in order to make the major changes that are necessary at CCS. If you watched the past two CCS School Board broadcasts, you will see what I mean. That is, if the right people run for the school board and the voters in 2020 are smart enough to elect five more Danny Blanton allies to the School Board. School Board members who will ask questions and demand answers. And expect the right answers. And make a clean sweep of CCS administration if they don't get them. That is the only situation that will work to actually educate our children to twenty-first century standards of performance.

Also, Remember to vote against the sales tax increase referendum that will be on the November 2019 election ballot. And keep on voting against any tax increases until we have a school board that will listen to the people and do what is actually the best for educating children and not get excessively and obsessively bogged down by David Brinkley's "Touch-Down Club," drain pipes under football fields and Astro-Turf.

Folks, Stay tuned for more articles in this series.